LIBRARIES

Chinese have valued books very highly and libraries, some of them of vast extent, have been assembled. The largest have been collected under imperial auspices. We have repeatedly seen how the destruction of successive imperial libraries in the vicissitudes of civil war and foreign invasion has been one of the major sources of loss to scholarship. Buddhist monasteries often have considerable libraries, but these specialize in the literature of that faith. Many private collections have also been assembled and some of them handed down for generations. Again the hazards of war and of changing family fortunes have sooner or later led to their destruction or dispersion. But for the art of printing which made possible the production of many copies of a single edition, most of the ancient books would long since have disappeared. Even as it is, a large proportion of the literary treasures of the past have vanished in whole or in part, leaving at most no traces but a title and perhaps a few quotations. However, fragile though Chinese paper may appear to be, Sung editions are by no means unknown, and many examples have come down to us of the work of Yuan and Ming printers.

EDUCATION

Formal education in China before the close of the nineteenth century was dominated by the preparation for the two chief learned professions—the service of the state and the Buddhist priesthood. The training for the latter was conducted only in monasteries and for the novitiate which led to membership in a monastic community. Except indirectly, through the instruction which the monks gave the laity and through Buddhist services

and literature, it exerted no influence upon the life of the Empire as a whole. On the other hand, the type of education which in theory led to the civil service examinations and which was controlled by the requirements for these ordeals was entered upon by many who either did not aspire to compete or who were never successful. The large majority of those who received some training in the elementary schools remained outside the charmed circle of the holders of degrees.

It would, however, give an incomplete picture of the older edu-